OTHER NOTICES

Bacon, J. S. D. *The Science of Heredity.* London, 1951. Watts & Co. Pp. viii + 192. Price 3s. 6d.

MOST of this book is a well-written elementary introduction to genetics by a scientist, who is not apparently himself a geneticist but has managed to keep up with recent advances in this field.

The two controversial chapters are the last two on " Arguments against Genetics " and " The impact of genetical knowledge on the life of man." In the first of these the author states his opinion that the Lysenko controversy is a conflict that has developed between the practical plant breeder, whose ideas, though useful, may be basically wrong and therefore in the long run require modification, and the academic scientist, whose ideas may be sound but who has insufficient experience to use them in an economically useful way. No comment is made on the adoption of Lysenko's views, to the exclusion of others, in the Soviet sphere by official decree. Further, the author considers that Lysenko's views have been unjustifiably ignored and should be experimentally tested. Certainly Communist geneticists outside the Soviet sphere would be better advised to try to repeat some of Lysenko's critical experiments than to publish attacks on " Mendel-Morganism " based on merely philosophical considerations.

In the last chapter there are brief references to human genetics. The views associated with the word " Eugenics " are, as often in books of this kind, those of the more extreme eugenists of a generation ago. Nevertheless the author looks forward to future eugenic action, since his penultimate sentence reads : " No one would pretend that these (the characteristics of the science of genetics) justify its immediate application to the control of human reproduction, although there is no reason to doubt that this will eventually become a possibility." C. O. C.

Lam, Mrs. Mithan. *Women's Work in India.* Some points from an address given after the Annual Meeting on December 5th, 1950, of the Women's Council (co-operating with the women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon).

MRS. MITHAN LAM, M.Sc., ex-Sheriff of Bombay, said that the population of Bombay has more than doubled since 1939. The increase of population in India is now five million a year. There are now, however, family planning centres all over the country—three clinics in Bombay City alone. Five travelling medical vans visit isolated villages, and the women crowd to them. Equal pay for equal work is now established in India. More than one-third of medical students are women. There are women police. Indeed, most professions are now open to women ; and they are doing splendid work amongst the untouchables. According to the Constitution of Free India, women have the same rights and responsibilities as men.

Mrs. Lam was a member of the All India Conference of 1949. U. G. D.

PERIODICALS

Annals of Eugenics

October 1950, Vol. 15, Part 3.—*Rhesus type D^u.*—By P. H. Renton and F. Stratton.—A valuable study of cell samples showing the D^u modification of the D antigen is reported. Methods of detecting D^u are discussed and the variations observed in its antigenic reactions described. Family data indicate that D^u is inherited as an allele at the D-d locus, though the occurrence of three unexplained anomalies in the records suggests that further complications have yet to be unravelled. The frequency of the D^u gene is estimated to be rather less than 0·5 per cent. Since D^u may be antigenic to recipients of Rh-negative blood, it is of practical importance in transfusion ; the authors state how this danger should be excluded, pointing out the peculiar difficulties in a population that has a high proportion of R_o.

Measurements of infants at birth.—By A. Low.—Measurements of 450 male and 450 female infants at the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital during 1923-6 are summarized ; in addition to weight and length, twenty-three measurements were made on each. Though the data are compared with those reported by other workers, the author scarcely discusses adequately the extent to which comparisons may be vitiated by differing criteria of prematurity. The means reported are interesting for reference, but the material seems surprisingly undigested.

Congenital total colour blindness associated with otosclerosis.—By A. G. Macgregor and R. Harrison. —Total colour blindness is much rarer than, and must be distinguished from, red-green blindness. A pedigree of 118 members containing four cases of achromatopsia is therefore of value in itself ; the interest is enhanced by the fact that otosclerotic deafness occurs in the same pedigree, the colour-blind individuals being four of the ten affected. The pedigree is consistent with recessive inheritance for achromatopsia, dominant for otosclerosis ; there is no positive evidence of linkage of these